

Questions and Answers 1

Question 1-1: Is there any difference between non-self and voidness?

Answer 1-1: In the Dhammapada the Buddha says: ‘All dhammas are non-self (sabbe dhamma anatta).’ Here, dhammas refer to both conditioned dhammas which include all mentality and materiality, and unconditioned dhamma which is Nibbāna. A meditator will begin to understand what is non-self when he practise Vipassanā wherein he comprehends mentality-and-materiality or five aggregate as impermanent, suffering, and non-self. When he attains the path knowledge and fruition knowledge he will further understand that Nibbāna also is non-self.

As regards voidness, it has a wider meaning. For example, in the Cūḷasuvhānata Sutta of Majjhima Nikāya, the Buddha says that when a bhikkhu stays in the forest, his perception of forest is void of elephants, cattle, horses, mares, gold, silver, the assembly of men and women. When the bhikkhu practises the earth kasiṇa his perception of earth is void of forest too. When the bhikkhu practises the base of infinite space, his perception of infinite space is void of the perception of earth too. As for higher immaterial attainments, they are to be understood in the same way. When the bhikkhu practises Vipassanā his perception is void of permanence, happiness, and self. When he attains Nibbāna he will see the real voidness, because Nibbāna is void of mentality and materiality, void of permanence and self, and void of greed, hatred and delusion.

Question 1-2: The Venerable Sāriputta and The Venerable Mahāmoggallāna’s arahattamagga were associated with aggāsāvaka-bodhiñāṇa, but Bāhiya Dārucīriya’s arahattamagga was associated with mahāsāvaka-bodhiñāṇa. Is aggāsāvaka-bodhiñāṇa superior to mahāsāvaka-bodhiñāṇa? Apart from the duration needed to fulfil pāramīs for the two kinds of

sāvaka-bodhiñāṇa, is there any other reason for their difference? They were all arahants, why were they different?

Answer 1-2: In terms of the attainment of arahatship they were all the same. However, as what the Buddha said in the Anupada Sutta of Majjhima Nikāya, The Venerable Sāriputta had great wisdom, wide wisdom, joyous wisdom, quick wisdom, keen wisdom and penetrative wisdom. He could understand and explain a short stanza given by the Buddha in many thousand ways. He could understand each mental formation and each type of materiality in detail. He could even count the rain drops fell at the same moment in the whole India. In terms of wisdom he had no equal among the Buddha's disciples.

As for The Venerable Mahāmoggallāna, he was foremost in psychic powers among the Buddha's disciple. Bāhiya Dārucīriya was foremost in quick attainment of arahatship. The Buddha also was an arahant, but he could know everything he wanted to know through his Omniscient Knowledge (sabbaññutañāṇa) which belongs only to the Buddha.

Question 1-3: Most of the people think that after a person's death there is a permanent soul remained. This is the eternal view. The Buddha instructs us to remove both the eternal view and annihilation view, and to practise the middle path. What is the middle path? If we accept that a person who is not yet liberated has to be reborn in the round of rebirths, does it mean that we have a permanent soul or self? Is this not a kind of eternal view?

The Chinese version of Agama says that Noble Eightfold Path can be divided into mundane and supramundane. Could the Sayadaw please explain that? And what are their respective benefits?

Answer 1-3: The middle path is the Noble Eightfold Path. The mundane Noble Eightfold Path is included in the three trainings that occur before the attainment of the path. The supramundane Noble Eightfold Path is the four ariya-magga.

Among the eight path factors of mundane level, right speech, right action and right livelihood are included in the training of

virtuous conduct. Right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration are included in the training of concentration. When you are practising Samatha you are cultivating these three factors. Right understanding and right thought are included in the training of wisdom.

The first path factor of the Noble Eightfold Path is the right understanding. What is the right understanding? It is the right understanding of the Noble Truth of Suffering, the Noble Truth of the Cause of Suffering, the Noble Truth of Cessation of Suffering, and the Noble Truth of the Path Leading to Cessation of Suffering.

What is the Noble Truth of Suffering? The five aggregates of clinging are suffering. When you practise the discernment of materiality and the discernment of mentality, you will be able to see with insight that you and all other living beings are composed of only mentality and materiality, or only the five aggregates. There is no self at all. At this stage you understand what is the Noble Truth of Suffering, and with this kind of right understanding you can temporarily remove the wrong view of personality (*sakkāyadiṭṭhi*).

Having discerned mentality and materiality, you can proceed to practise dependent-origination that is the Noble Truth of the Cause of Suffering. You can see that a group of past causes gives rise to a group of present effects. The past causes were only mentality-and-materiality; the present effects are also only mentality-and-materiality. Only mentality-and-materiality give rise to mentality-and-materiality. When the past causes arose and passed away, they did not think, 'By our arising, let such and such effects arise.' The present effects too do not think, 'If such and such causes arise, we shall arise.' The causes and effects arise and pass away according to a fixed natural law. The causes do not make any endeavour to make the effects arise, and the effects do not make any endeavour to arise when the causes have arisen. With the arising of the causes the effects arise when the condition is suitable. The causes are impermanent, suffering and non-self, and the effects are also impermanent, suffering and non-self. There was no self in the past and there is no self in the present. Thus the principle of non-self and the round of rebirths do not contradict to

each other.

When you practise dependent-origination, you should practise to see that there is a continuity of mentality-and-materiality from past to future. If you can practise correctly in this way, you have temporarily removed the wrong view of annihilation (uccheda-ditṭhi). You should practise to see that all mentality and materiality pass away immediately after their arising. If you can practise correctly in this way, you have temporarily removed the wrong view of eternity (sassata-ditṭhi). You should practise to see that all mentality and materiality have their own causes that give rise to them. If you can practise correctly in this way, you have temporarily removed the wrong view of non-cause (ahetuka-ditṭhi). You should practise to see that causes produce their respective results. If you can practise correctly in this way, you have temporarily removed the wrong view of inefficacy (akiriya-ditṭhi). Thus, this kind of right understanding not only can remove our doubt about past, present, and future lives, but also can remove various kinds of wrong view.

Then you can proceed to practise the actual Vipassanā, discerning mentality, materiality, and their causes as impermanent, suffering, and non-self. When you practise thus your defilements are temporarily abandoned; this is the mundane Noble Truth of Cessation of Suffering. And among the concomitant mental formations that arise together with insight mind, wisdom is right understanding, applied thought is right thought, energy is right effort, mindfulness is right mindfulness, and one-pointedness is right concentration. Furthermore when you practise meditation you must keep your precepts pure. So you have also fulfilled right speech, right action, and right livelihood. These are the mundane Noble Truth of the Path Leading to Cessation of Suffering.

When you practise the Knowledge of Arising and Passing-Away, you will be able to see your future attainment of arahatship and Parinibbāna. For example, you may see that you will attain arahatship at the age of twenty in your next life, and attain Parinibbāna at the age of sixty in that life. In this case you will be able to see that all your defilements will cease when you attain arahatship at the age of twenty, and all your mentality and

materiality will cease when you attain Parinibbāna at the age of sixty. This kind of cessation is also the mundane Noble Truth of Cessation of Suffering.

When you attain the Path Knowledge which takes Nibbāna as object, all the eight path factors are present in the path consciousness. The realisation of Nibbāna is right understanding, the application of the mind to Nibbāna is right thought, mindfulness on Nibbāna is right mindfulness, the effort to realise Nibbāna is right effort, and one-pointedness on Nibbāna is right concentration. The three path factors of right speech, right action and right livelihood perform the function fulfilling virtuous conduct, and the noble person will never break any of the five precepts in the future, not even in his dream. These eight path factors are the supramundane Noble Eightfold Path. Having attained the path of stream-enterer, he will live for another seven lives at most before he attains final liberation which is the benefit of supramundane Noble Eightfold Path. And the benefit of mundane Noble Eightfold Path is that it can lead to the attainment of supramundane Noble Eightfold Path.

Question 1-4: Is burning artificial gold and silver made of paper to the departed ones superstitious?

Answer 1-4: In Theravāda Buddhism there is no such a practice. However, we may do meritorious deeds such as dāna on the departed ones' behalf and transfer the merits to them. If they are reborn as a kind of peta who can share others' merits, and if they know the merits transferred to them and rejoice in the meritorious deeds, they can gain the merits and may be reborn in a happy existence. If, however, they are reborn as other kinds of peta, in hell, in animal world, in human world, in asura world etc., they cannot share the merits transferred to them.

Question 1-5: A person who delights in solitude may be seen as unapproachable or uncooperative. So the question is 'How can a person be delighted in solitude yet sociable?'

Answer 1-5: Social life is not conducive to meditation practice. In fact it is a great hindrance to the development of concentration and insight. Before you attain any path and fruition you should live in solitude, engage in meditation, and never get entangled in the social life. Some people may see the good aspect of yours and think that you are a real monk or nun who lives in accordance of the Buddha's instructions, arduously practising the Dhamma. Some other people may wrongly see that you are a 'bad' person. As regards how others look at you, there is not much you can do, because you cannot make all of them look at you as a good person. Furthermore their view is not important at all. You would not become an enlightened person or go to hell because of others' view. If you want to associate with others, it is better for you to do so after you have attained arahatship, if not, at least the path and fruition of stream-enterer. If, however, you do not know how to practise up to the attainment of path and fruition, you should live with a skilled teacher and practise under his guidance until you attain path and fruition.

Question 1-6: According to the Mahāsuññata Sutta, it is easier to succeed in meditation if a person lives in solitude at a secluded place. Does it mean that group meditation is not helpful? Is practising alone at a secluded place suitable for a bhikkhuni?

Answer 1-6: There are three kinds of solitude: solitude of the body (kāya-viveka), solitude of the mind (citta-viveka), and solitude of tranquillity (upadhi-viveka).

If you renounce the world and live in a secluded place you have attained the solitude of the body. If, however, your mind is still attached to worldly life and sensual pleasures, you will not have true solitude, because you have not the solitude of the mind, and your solitude of the body is useless. Contrary to that, if you live in society without attachment towards your companions and sensual pleasures, you are living in solitude, just like what the Buddha said of himself. If, however, your mind is not firm enough to be unaffected by others and sensual objects, it is better for you to have both the solitude of the body and the solitude of the mind.

Here I shall give you another example so that you may understand what I have said better. In the Maṅgala Sutta, the Buddha advises us to associate with the wise and to avoid the fools. The expression ‘associating with the wise’, however, does not mean mere approaching a wise person and staying with him day and night. It implies learning and acquiring some knowledge from the person who is possessed of wisdom. The advice ‘do not associate with the fools’ does not necessarily mean not to stay with a foolish person. One may even live with him for the purpose of persuading and guiding him to the right path. In such a case one is not going against the advice of the Maṅgala Sutta. An example is the sojourn of the Buddha in the Uruvela Grove in the company of ascetics of wrong view to help them abandon their wrong path. Similarly you may live together with others but remain in a life of solitude. Thus group meditation does not against the principle of solitude. It is a problem only when you are fond of ‘talking meditation’.

Another point to consider is that whether you know the path leading to arahatship. If you know you can practise on your own; there is no problem. But if you do not know then you must depend on a good teacher who can guide you to the attainment of arahatship. This is the benefit of association with others mentioned by the Buddha in the Mahāsuññata Sutta.

Once The Venerable Ānanda said to the Buddha that half of a bhikkhu’s holy life depended on a good friend. But the Buddha said to him that the whole of a bhikkhu’s holy life depended on a good friend. And a good friend here means a person who can guide you to the attainment of arahatship. Thus if you hope for your own liberation and others’ liberation, it is very important for you to associate with and learn from such a person.

Question 1-7: Mahāyāna Zen tradition teaches ‘the practice of sudden enlightenment’ leading to ‘the understanding of sabhava of citta’ which is complete realisation. But some says that a person can attain ‘the understanding of sabhāva of citta’ without practising meditation. Could the Sayadaw explain what is ‘the sudden understanding of sabhāva of citta’?

Answer 1-7: I do not understand Mahāyāna Buddhism. So I do not know what you mean by ‘sudden enlightenment’.

Here I shall explain to you what is taught in Theravāda Buddhism. According to Theravāda Buddhism there are four types of person:

1. An ugghaṭitaññū person who can attain enlightenment while listening to a short discourse on the Dhamma.
2. A vipaṇcitaññū person who can attain enlightenment while listening to a detailed exposition on the Dhamma.
3. A neyya person who cannot attain enlightenment by mere listening to a discourse on the Dhamma, but can attain enlightenment after practising the Dhamma with diligence.
4. A padaparama person who cannot attain enlightenment no matter how diligent he practises in his present life.

Now the first two types of person are no longer extant in the world. There are only the last two types of person. To attain enlightenment, a neyya person should practise Samatha and Vipassanā systematically. Having developed strong and powerful concentration, he should discern all types of materiality, and then discern mentality. This is the beginning stage of the understanding of sabhāva of citta. When he proceeds to practise dependent-origination, he has a deeper understanding regarding the sabhāva of citta. When he practises Vipassanā his understanding is even much deeper. And when he attains arahatship his understanding of sabhāva of citta will reach the peak.

Question 1-8: Could Reverend Sayadaw please give some instructions on how to practise walking meditation? For example, is it best to walk with slow, medium, or fast speed? And how should we ‘think’ while walking? Could the very Reverend Sayadaw give me, a beginner, some pointers on how to develop deeper concentration?

Answer 1-8: There are four types of sampajana, clear

comprehension:

1. Sāthhaka sampajana: clear comprehension on what is beneficial and what is not beneficial.
2. Sappaya sampajana: clear comprehension on what is suitable and what is not suitable.
3. Gocara sampajana: clear comprehension on meditation subject with respect in all postures.
4. Asammoha sampajana: clear comprehension with insight on ultimate mentality and materiality. This is Vipassanā.

The first two types of clear comprehension are not meditation. The last one is Vipassanā. Thus if you are practising Samatha meditation, you are practising the third type of clear comprehension. And you should concentrate on your meditation subject with respect in all postures, namely, sitting, standing, walking, and lying down. If you can concentrate on your meditation subject in all postures as far as you can, your concentration will be improved.

The Visuddhimagga states eleven things that lead to the arising of the concentration enlightenment factor:

1. making the basis clean. This means that you should keep your body, nail, clothing etc. clean.
2. skill in the sign. This means that you should be skilled in knowing the parikamma nimitta, uggaha nimitta, and paṭibhāga nimitta of your meditation subject, such as the ānāpāna nimitta, the nimitta of the earth kasiṇa.
3. balancing the faculties.
4. restraining the mind on occasion. This means that when your enlightenment factors of investigating dhamma, joy and energy are excessive, you should restrain your mind and develop enlightenment factors of tranquillity, concentration and equanimity.
5. exerting the mind on occasion. This means that when your enlightenment factors of tranquillity, concentration and equanimity are excessive, you should exert your mind and develop enlightenment factors of investigating dhamma, joy and energy.

6. encouraging the listless mind by means of faith and a sense of urgency.
7. looking on with equanimity at what is occurring rightly according to its past kamma.
8. avoidance of unconcentrated persons.
9. association with concentrated persons.
10. reviewing the benefits of jhānas and liberation.
11. inclination of mind towards developing concentration.

So, you can develop the above factors to improve your concentration.

Question 1-9: Buddha Gotama did give definite prediction to many arahants that they would become a Buddha after a few aeons, but those arahants had destroyed all their defilements, had no more rebirth, and entered parinibbāna when they passed away in that very life. Could they be reborn in human world etc. because of the definite prediction given to them by the Buddha? Is it true that they could give away their body and all external possessions because their mind is free from craving, attachment and defilement, and they will become Buddhas when their pāramīs are mature? If it is not, why is it not?

Answer 1-9: In the Theravāda Buddhism none of the arahants got the definite prediction from the Buddha to become a Buddha in the future.

There is a famous passage uttered by many arahants in front of the Buddha after they attained arahatship:

‘Birth is ended, the holy life has been lived, done is what to be done, there is nothing else to do (to attain arahatship).’

From here we clearly know that an arahant will not be reborn after death. The Buddha too will not be reborn after death. Otherwise what they said is false, and they were telling lie. However it is impossible for the Buddha and arahants to tell lie. They said so because they had completely destroyed all defilements including the attachment towards any life, and had destroyed all the kammic forces which could produce future life.

Without attachment to any life and without kammic forces which could produce future life, there cannot be any future life. This is the eternal law. Thus according to the Theravāda Buddhism none of the arahants including the Buddha could be reborn in future.

Question 1-10: Does the Sayadaw teach to incorporate ‘starvation’ with meditation? Does ‘starvation’ have any good or bad effect in meditation? Is it recorded in the Theravāda Canon that any disciple of the Buddha attained arahantship through ‘starvation’? Now in this meditation retreat there is a participant undergoing starvation. I heard that he is going to continue his ‘starvation practice’ until the end of this retreat. Can a long period of starvation affect a person’s mind and body?

Answer 1-10: Right in the first discourse delivered by the Buddha, the Buddha mentions that there are two extremes: indulging in sensual pleasures and self-mortification. These are two kinds of wrong path. Living in enjoyment of sensual pleasures is not the path for attainment of Nibbāna. It is just an ignoble practice called kāmasukhallikanuyoga, the practice of indulging in sensual pleasures. This kind of practice is inferior, the practice of villagers, the practice of worldlings, the practice of non-ariya, and not beneficial. Again the efforts to make oneself suffer by exposure of one’s body to fire, to the sun, by keeping one’s hand raised continuously, with a view to prevent mental defilements from appearing do not form the way to Nibbāna. It is another ignoble practice called attakilamathanuyoga, the practice of self-mortification. This kind of practice also is not beneficial. And the practice of starvation falls into this group. This is not the practice praised by the Buddha.

The Buddha always advises us to practise the middle path, not any of the two extremes mentioned above. In the Vinaya there is a rule laid down by the Buddha that bhikkhus and bhikkhunis must wisely reflect on the using of alms-food thus: ‘I take this alms-food not for amusement as children do; I take this alms-food not to be mad with strength; I take this alms-food not to beautify my body; I take this alms-food not for a clear skin and complexion.

I take this alms-food only to maintain the vitality of my body; I take this alms-food for warding off the oppression of hunger; I take this alms-food for facilitating the noble practice.’

This is the proper attitude you should have towards alms-food. The Buddha too adopted this kind of attitude. When he was still an unenlightened bodhisatta, he practised self-mortification for six long years. And one of his practices was to take only a grain every day. At a later time, however, he realised that it was not beneficial and abandoned this kind of practice. He started to take normal meal and regained his physical strength. Having abandoned the two extremes of sensual enjoyment and self-mortification, he practised the middle path and before long attained full enlightenment.

Questions and Answers 2

Question 2-1: Some meditators have attained the eight attainments (samāpatti), and even practised Vipassanā, but their behaviour is gross and precepts are not pure. Because of this many people have doubt about this practice. Should a person who has the above attainments not be able to keep his mind, speech and bodily actions purer than those who have not attained the above attainments?

Should a person who have attained the eight attainments, practised dependent-origination, and attained Nibbāna, keep his experiences and do not reveal them to others?

Answer 2-1: According to the Pāḷi text, to attain jhānas, paths, and fruitions, a person must have purification of virtue. It is impossible for a person who has no purification of virtue to attain any jhāna, path, and fruition, although he may be able to develop his concentration up to a certain degree.

I think I should make it clear to you that I never confirm any meditator's attainments of jhāna, path, and fruition. Although I do teach some meditators, in accordance with the Pāḷi Texts, to practise the first jhāna, the second jhāna etc., I teach them only according to what they report. It does not mean that I confirm their attainments. Their attainments may be true, but may be false also, because some meditators are truthful, but some are not truthful.

It is difficult to say that a person who has the above attainments must be able to keep his mind, speech and bodily actions purer than those who have not attained the above attainments, because some people who have not attained the above attainments may also be very pure in their conducts. A good example is the Mahānāga Mahāthera. He was the teacher of a Dhammadinna arahant and practised Samatha and Vipassanā meditation for more than sixty years, but he was still a worldling (*puthujjana*). Although he was still a worldling, no defilements appeared within those sixty years because of strong, powerful Samatha and

Vipassanā practices. And his precepts were exceedingly pure. Due to this, he thought of himself: ‘I have attained arahantship.’

One day, his disciple Dhammadinna arahant was sitting in his own daytime quarters, and he thought: ‘Has our teacher, the Mahānāga Mahāthera who lives at Uccavalika, brought his work of asceticism to its conclusion, or not?’ He saw that his teacher was still a worldling, and he knew that if he did not go to him, he would die a worldling. He rose up into the air with supernormal power and alighted near the Mahānāga Mahāthera, who was sitting in his daytime quarters. He paid homage to him, doing his duty, and sat down at one side. To the question ‘Why have you come unexpectedly, friend Dhammadinna?’ he replied ‘I have come to ask a question, Venerable Sir’. He was told ‘Ask friend. If we know, we shall say’. He asked a thousand questions. The Mahānāga Mahāthera replied without hesitation to each question.

To the remark ‘Your knowledge is very keen, Venerable Sir; when was this state attained by you?’ he replied ‘Sixty years ago, friend’. – ‘Do you practise concentration, Venerable Sir?’ – ‘That is not difficult, friend.’ – ‘Then make an elephant, Venerable Sir.’ The Mahānāga Mahāthera made an elephant all white. ‘Now, Venerable Sir, make that elephant come straight at you with his ears outstretched, his tail extended, putting his trunk in his mouth and making a horrible trumpeting.’ The Mahāthera did so. Seeing the frightful aspect of the rapidly approaching elephant, he sprang up and made to run away. Then the Elder with cankers destroyed put out his hand, and catching him by the hem of his robe, he said ‘Venerable Sir, is there any timidity in one whose cankers are destroyed?’

Then he recognized that he was still a worldling. He knelt at the Venerable Dhammadinna’s feet and said: ‘Help me, friend Dhammadinna.’ – ‘Venerable Sir, I will help you; that is why I came. Do not worry.’ Then he expounded a meditation subject to him. The Elder took the meditation subject and went up onto the walk, and with the third footstep he reached arahantship.

There is a story mentioned in the commentary of the Majjhima Nikāya. An old man became a bhikkhu at old age, and lived with his arahant preceptor who was a young bhikkhu. Although his

preceptor was an arahant he did not know it. One day, on their way of alms-round, he asked his preceptor: ‘Venerable Sir, how does an arahant look like?’ His arahant preceptor replied: ‘It is very difficult, friend. There is a man who becomes a bhikkhu at old age and lives with an arahant, but he does know that the arahant is an arahant.’ Even though his preceptor had given him a hint he did not understand that his young preceptor was an arahant. Thus it is not easy to recognize who is an arahant.

If a person is really a noble one he will have few wishes, be contented and humble. He will not simply reveal his attainments. And if the person is a bhikkhu or bhikkhuni, according to the vinaya rule laid down by the Buddha, he or she should never tell his or her attainments to a non-fully ordained person, including novice monks, novice nuns, and lay-people. Furthermore, from the story of the Mahānāga Mahāthera we know that it is not easy to be certain of one’s attainments. Thus it is better not to tell others at all. Another point to consider is that some listeners may believe but some may not, and if your attainments of the path and fruition are true, the non-believers will create some bad kamma. This will bring harm to them. Thus, although hearing of others’ noble attainments may arouse some people’s faith in the Dhamma, it is still better not to reveal one’s attainments at all.

Question 2-2: If a meditator is not truthful, and does not truthfully report his meditation experience, what loss will he face?

Answer 2-2: Since he is telling lie his precept is not pure. As a result of that he cannot attain any jhāna, path, and fruition, and also cannot have any distinguished progress in his meditation practice. If he intentionally makes a false claim to the attainment of jhāna, path, and fruition, he commits a serious offence. And if this bad kamma ripens at his near death moment he will be reborn in hell.

As a Buddhist we must know clearly what is our goal, namely, to free ourselves from the round of rebirths. This is the best benefit we can gain. Only then can we guide others onto the path we have trodden, and provide them the best benefit. Thus, if we are dear to

ourselves as well as to others, we must be truthful. Can we say that a person who causes himself to fall into hell is dear to himself? Certainly he is not.

If, however, he repents at a later time and practises meditation truthfully and diligently, he may attain jhāna, path, and fruition.

Question 2-3: Is there a kind of person who can never attain Buddhahood?

Answer 2-3: There are a few types of person who cannot attain Buddhahood. The first type of person is the Buddha, because a Buddha has attained Buddhahood, and can never attain another Buddhahood. Future Paccekabuddhas, chief disciples, and great disciples who have received definite prophecy from a Buddha also cannot attain Buddhahood, because they will certainly attain Paccekabodhi, aggasāvaka-bodhi, and mahāsāvaka-bodhi respectively as predicted by the Buddha. They have no more future life, and there are no future mentality and materiality to fulfil the ten perfections. Further, a person who has attained any path and fruition, such as the path and fruition of stream-enterer, can never attain Buddhahood. Because even the lower stage of noble one, a stream-enterer, will have seven future lives at most, and will destroy all defilements and attain Parinibbāna after death in his last life. There is not enough time for him to fulfil the ten perfections that takes at least four incalculables and a hundred thousand aeons.

As for future ordinary disciples, if they have received a definite prophecy from a Buddha, they also cannot attain Buddhahood, because they will certainly become ordinary disciples as predicted by the Buddha. If, however, they have not received a definite prophecy from a Buddha, they can still practise the bodhisatta path, fulfil the ten perfections, and may one day be confirmed by a Buddha to be a bodhisatta. If you want you may try, but to succeed in that is extremely rare.

Question 2-4: How to attain liberation through seeing, hearing, feeling, and knowing?

Answer 2-4: If you, while seeing, hearing, feeling, and knowing, can discern mentality and materiality, and comprehend them as impermanent, suffering, and non-self, you may attain liberation.

Question 2-5: According to the Majjhima Agama the Venerable Ānanda attained arahantship during the process of lying down. How did he comprehend mentality and materiality then?

Answer 2-5: You should remember that, after becoming a bhikkhu, the Venerable Ānanda could analyse the five aggregates of the internal, external, past, future, present, inferior, superior, gross, subtle, far, and near. He could practise dependent-origination and discern the causes of those five aggregates. He could comprehend those five aggregates and their causes as impermanent, suffering, and non-self. And later, he attained the path and fruition of stream-enterer together with the fourfold analytical knowledge in his first rains-retreat while listening to a discourse delivered by the Venerable Mantānīputta Puṇṇa. Furthermore a person who attains the fourfold analytical knowledge must have practised Vipassanā up to the Knowledge of Equanimity Towards Formations in his past life.

Having attained the path and fruition of stream-enterer, he continued to practise Vipassanā for forty-four long years. On the night he attained arahantship, he practised walking meditation for whole night, comprehending especially the materiality of the forty-two part of the body as impermanent, suffering, and non-self. However, because of excessive effort his concentration became weak. Thus he thought of lying down to balance the faculties of effort and concentration. During the process of lying down those faculties became balance and thus he attained arahantship even before his body touched the bed. You should know that this is not instant enlightenment, because he had been thoroughly comprehending mentality and materiality as impermanent, suffering, and non-self in various ways, such as the ways of mentality-materiality, five aggregates, twelve factors of dependent-origination, for forty-four years after his attainment of

the fruition of stream-enterer.

If a person has thoroughly comprehended internal and external mentality-and-materiality as impermanent, suffering, and non-self, and if his insight is matured, he can, on the verge of attainment of the path and fruition, comprehend only the dhamma and the characteristic he likes the most. For example, he can comprehend only materiality as impermanent. This is enough for him to attain the path and fruition. If, however, he has not thoroughly comprehended mentality and materiality as impermanent, suffering, and non-self, he cannot attain any path and fruition by comprehending on a dhamma as impermanent, suffering, or non-self.

Question 2-6: Can we use upekkhā-bhāvanā as a base to reach the four immaterial jhānas?

Answer 2-6: No. To reach the four immaterial jhānas, you must first practise kasiṇa meditation up to the fourth jhāna, for example, the fourth jhāna of the earth kasiṇa. Having emerged from the fourth kasiṇa jhāna, you should remove the kasiṇa paṭibhāga nimitta which spreads up to the infinite universe. After removing the kasiṇa paṭibhāga nimitta, there is only the infinite space left. Only then can you practise the base of infinite space. By practising upekkhā-bhāvanā, there is no kasiṇa nimitta to remove, and you cannot get the infinite space. Thus you cannot practise the immaterial jhāna based upon upekkhā-bhāvanā which has living beings as its object.

Question 2-7: In which of the Canon is it stated that we must analyse mentality and materiality after practising the four-elements meditation?

Answer 2-7: It is stated in many suttas and their commentaries, for example, the Mahāgopālaka Sutta of Majjhima Nikāya and the Aparijānana Sutta of Saṃyutta Nikāya. As for the discernment of materiality, the brief way is stated in the Mahāsatiṭṭhāna Sutta, and the detailed way is stated in the Mahāhatthipadopama Sutta,

Mahārahulovāda Sutta and Dhātuviḥaṅga Sutta of Majjhima Nikāya, and the Dhātuviḥaṅga Pāḷi of Vibhaṅga of Abhidhamma Piṭaka.

There are two kinds of individual: a bare-insight-vehicle individual (*suddha-vipassanā-yānika*) and a tranquillity-vehicle individual (*samatha-yānika*).

A tranquillity-vehicle individual is one who has developed one of the jhānas and, therefore, completed the purification of mind. When he wishes to complete the purification of view, he should enter into one of the jhānas, although not the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception. Having emerged from that jhāna he should discern the jhāna factors, beginning with applied thought (*vitakka*), etc., and all the mental-concomitants (*cetasika*) associated with that jhāna consciousness. Each should be discerned according to characteristic, function, manifestation, and proximate cause. He is able to discern them because he has discerned the five jhāna factors while practising Samatha meditation.

Then he should discern the heart-base materiality where those types of mentality reside, the four elements on which that heart-base materiality depends, and the other types of derived materiality present there. They should also be discerned according to characteristic, function, manifestation, and proximate cause.

Then he should practise the discernment of materiality before he discerns the five-door thought-processes. If he has not practised the discernment of materiality, he cannot discern the five-door thought-processes, because he is unable to discern the transparent-elements of eye, ear, etc. depended upon by eye-consciousness, ear-consciousness, etc. Thus he is unable to discern the five-door thought-processes.

If, however, that tranquillity-vehicle individual wishes to begin by discerning material dhammas, without having discerned the mental dhammas, he should proceed in the exact same way as a bare-insight-vehicle individual. According to the instruction given by the Visuddhimagga in Chapter Eighteen, a bare-insight-vehicle individual develops the purification of view as follows:

‘A bare-insight-vehicle individual, or a tranquillity-vehicle

individual who wishes to begin insight practice by discerning materiality instead of mentality, should discern the four elements in brief, or in detail, in one of the various ways given in Chapter Eleven on the definition of the four elements.’

According to these instructions from the Visuddhimagga, a person who wishes to proceed directly to the practice of Vipassanā without any jhānas as a foundation, or a person who has attained one or all of the eight jhānas, but wishes to begin Vipassanā by discerning materiality first, must begin by discerning the four elements in brief, in detail, or both in brief and in detail.

As regards the discernment of materiality and the discernment of mentality, the Majjhima commentary and the second book of Abhidhamma commentary say:

‘Of these two, discernment of materiality refers to the defining of the four elements in the brief way or the detailed way.’

These instructions found in the commentaries, on how to discern materiality in Vipassanā, show that the Buddha taught that a bare-insight-vehicle individual, or a tranquillity-vehicle individual who wishes to begin by discerning materiality, must begin by discerning the four elements in brief or in detail. If a meditator practises according to the Teaching of the Buddha, it will produce the most beneficial result.

Here we should know that the commentaries are not written by the Venerable Buddhaghosa. He was just a translator who translated the Sinhalese version of commentaries into Pāḷi. Although some parts of the commentaries are no doubt compiled by later generations, most parts of it are handed down since the Buddha’s time. It was quite common during the Buddha’s time that after listening to a short discourse, some did not understand the meaning. So they approached the Buddha or some arahants such as the Venerable Sāriputta, the Venerable Mahāmoggallāna, the Venerable Ānanda, etc. for more detailed explanations. And those explanations were compiled as ‘Miscellaneous Teachings’ (Pakiṇṇaka Desana) by five hundred arahants during the first Buddhist Council. It was also called the Original Commentary (Mūla-Atṭhakathā) then. It was brought by the arahant Mahinda to Sri Lanka when he took up the mission to propagate the Dhamma

there. He knew that the later generation was unable to preserve the commentary in Pāḷi, so he translated it into Sinhalese, and it was called the Great Commentary (Mahā-Aṭṭhakathā). And during the Venerable Buddhaghosa's time, some felt that it was necessary to promote the study of Buddha's Teachings in Pāḷi, so he translated all the commentaries back into Pāḷi.

In the prologue to each of the four Nikāya Commentaries it is conveniently summarized by the Venerable Buddhaghosa himself as follows: 'I shall now take the commentary, whose object is to clarify the meaning of the subtle and most excellent Dīgha Nikāya ... set forth in detail by the Buddha and by his like [i.e. the Venerable Sāriputta and other expounders of discourses in the Sutta Piṭaka] – the commentary that in the beginning was chanted [at the First Council] and later rechanted [at the Second and Third], and was brought to the Sīhala Island by the Arahant Mahinda the Great and rendered into the Sīhala tongue for the benefit of the Islanders,. And from the commentary I shall remove the Sīhala tongue, replacing it by the graceful language that conforms with Scripture and is purified and free from flaws. Not diverging from the standpoint of the Elders residing in the Great Monastery [in Anurādhapura].'

There is only one instance in the Visuddhimagga where he openly advances an opinion of his own, with the words 'our preference here is this' (Chapter 13, para. 123). He does so once in the Majjhima Nikāya Commentary, too, saying 'the point is not dealt with by the Ancients, but this is my opinion' (MA. i, 28). Only these few instances are from his own opinion. He also says in the Dīgha Nikāya Commentary (DA. 567-8) that 'one's own opinion is the weakest authority of all and should only be accepted if it accords with the suttas'. So it is clear that he did not write his own commentary.

It is not right to criticize the Venerable Buddhaghosa, because he just translated the commentary handed down from the ancient time. For example, the chapter on dependent-origination of the Visuddhimagga is translated entirely from the Sammohavinodanī which is part of the Great Commentary. This is a commentary of dependent-origination taught by the Buddha in many suttas, such

as the whole Nidāna Saṃyutta. In many suttas the Buddha teaches that there are causes in the past life giving rise to the effects in the present life, for example, the past causes of ignorance, craving, clinging, volitional-formations and kamma give rise to the present five aggregates. The Buddha teaches also that there are causes in the present life giving rise to the effects in the future life. If you do not accept this teaching there will be a problem, because it means that you think that the Buddha said something non-sense or told lie. Further, if the teaching of dependent-origination were wrong, then you would not have to accumulate the ten perfections to become a Buddha. Why? By rejecting the teaching of dependent-origination you have rejected the fact that causes in the past life can give rise to the effects in the present life. If that were so, the past causes would not be able to affect you present life, and all the wholesome kamma that you did in your past life were useless. Also, the present causes would not be able to produce your future life, and you could do whatever you like. You could kill, steal, and commit sexual misconduct etc. without worry for the danger of falling into woeful states in your future life. Everything would happen purely by chance. It would be unnecessary for you to fulfil the ten perfections for at least four incalculables and a hundred thousand aeons to become a Buddha, because all the perfections that you have fulfilled would be in vain.

However, this is a kind of serious wrong view called the wrong view of inefficiency (*akiriya-ditṭhi*). Some may argue that they can still discern the working of cause and effect, for example, eating too much is the cause and indigestion is the effect. But it is not necessary for the Buddha to teach this kind of cause and effect, because every normal person knows it. They should ask themselves whether they know what is the causal kamma for their present human life. Can they say that the causal kamma is from the present life as well? Certainly they cannot. If, however, they still think that it is so, then they could perform a wholesome kamma and wish to become a deva. If the present kamma could produce the present effect, he would become a deva immediately. But certainly he cannot become a deva immediately because of

that kamma. Why? Because the causal kamma for their present human life must be from one of his past lives.

Thus it is very clear that the teaching of dependent-origination is not imagination, and it is not right to criticize that the Venerable Buddhaghosa was confuse. We must treat the commentaries with great respect, because they are the words of the Buddha and many great arahants.

Question 2-8: Did the Buddha have ‘akiriya dreams’. Is there mindfulness while dreaming?

Answer 2-8: All arahants, including Buddhas and Paccekabuddhas, do not dream, because they have destroyed all perverted illusion; in Pāḷi this is called ‘pahīnavipallasattā’.

Question 2-9: If a person who has sense-sphere, material-sphere, and immaterial-sphere wholesome consciousnesses want to be reborn in the human world, is it necessary for him to make a wish?

Answer 2-9: It is not necessary. If he wants to be reborn as a human being, he must depend on his sense-sphere wholesome kamma, but provided the kamma ripens at his near death moment. Whether he has the wish for human life or not, if he still has attachment to it his sense-sphere wholesome kamma will produce its result in accordance with its law. If, however, he enters into any fine-material jhāna or immaterial jhāna at near death moment, he will automatically be reborn in the fine-material sphere and immaterial sphere respectively in accordance to the working of kamma and kamma-result.

Questions and Answers 3

Question 3-1: In one of the Sayadaw's talks, the Sayadaw said that once our bodhisatta was a lion king, and he could communicate with other animals, such as elephant, hare, etc. Even among humankind we do face the problem of communication, how do different kinds of animal communicate between themselves?

Answer 3-1: I think it is due to our bodhisatta's pāramīs, enabling him to communicate with other animals. For example, the Buddha spoke only in one language, but all people in the whole India with different vernaculars could understand him without difficulty.

Question 3-2: One of the easy ways to get the white kasiṇa nimitta is to see other's skull. Does it have other significance in choosing the skull as object?

Answer 3-2: Actually I do teach meditators to practise the white kasiṇa with the white of the white skull, white flower, white stone, white cloth, etc. as object. In fact any white objects can serve as the basis of the white kasiṇa.

Question 3-3: How to be mindful of oneself and external objects?

Answer 3-3: To be mindful of oneself and external objects, one should practise the four foundations of mindfulness. They are:

1. Mindfulness of the body,
2. Mindfulness of feeling,
3. Mindfulness of consciousness,
4. Mindfulness of dhamma.

The first foundation consists of Samatha and Vipassanā meditation, whereas the latter three foundations consist of only Vipassanā.

If you practise mindfulness-of-breathing, you are practising

mindfulness of body. If you practise it continuously with respect, your mindfulness will become stronger and stronger, your concentration will become deeper and deeper, and your mind will become very quite and clear.

When you practise Vipassanā, you can clearly see the internal and external mentality-and-materiality and their causes, in other words, you can clearly discern the internal and external body, feeling, consciousness and dhamma. Thus, if you want to be mindful of yourself and external objects, you should strive to develop strong and powerful concentration, and then practise Vipassanā. It is the best if you can attain arahantship, because an arahant is always mindful.

Question 3-4: How to know that one has fallen into bhavaṅga?
How to avoid falling into bhavaṅga?

Answer 3-4: In between two thought-processes there are many bhavaṅga arising and passing away. Even though you are listening to me now, there are many bhavaṅga arising and passing away in your mind; this is natural. Usually people cannot be aware of the bhavaṅga because their concentration is weak. But when they develop concentration up to access concentration, they will be able to understand that sometimes they do fall into bhavaṅga. They will feel as if their mind knew nothing.

However they are still unable to see the bhavaṅga consciousness because the bhavaṅga consciousness take the object of near-death javana of past life as object. Only when they practise dependent-origination and are able to discern near-death javana together with its object in past life, they are able to discern the bhavaṅga consciousness.

Question 3-5: Somebody asks me, ‘Every Buddha statue has hairs, why monks and nuns’ heads are bald?’ And I was not able to answer. Could the Sayadaw help me answer this question?

Answer 3-5: In his last life, when our bodhisatta renounced the world at the bank of the Anoma River, he cut off his head hairs until they were all two finger-breadths in length. Since then his

head hairs remained always two finger-breadths in length, and never became longer nor shorter.

The Buddha allows bhikkhus and bhikkhunis to keep their hairs not longer than two finger-breadths. If their hairs are longer than two finger-breadths, they commit a dukkata offence. So if you are able to, you can, as you like, keep your hairs always two finger-breadths in length.

Question 3-6: Can every person practise meditation? Are there people who cannot get a nimitta even they have been practising for a long time? Is it due to their past bad kamma?

Answer 3-6: Yes, every person can practise meditation. However some may not be able to get a nimitta, and it may be due to their past kamma, lack of effort, lack of the guidance of a skilled teacher, wrong method, etc. or any combination of those causes.

Question 3-7: Is there merit for a layperson to make offering to a bhikkhu who has disrobed but still acts as a bhikkhu? If this kind of bhikkhu ordains people, what will be his kamma-result?

Answer 3-7: According to the Dakkhinavibhaṅga Sutta, even though the recipient is an animal or an immoral person, the giver still gain merit from his giving. However the merit is not superior because it is not purified by the recipient.

If a disrobed bhikkhu still wear robes and behave like a bhikkhu, he is considered as a thief because he steal the four requisites offered by lay-people. According to the vinaya rules laid down by the Buddha, he is considered as a pārajika person and can never be ordained as a bhikkhu in the rest of his life.

Question 3-8: Some doubt that the teaching of Nibbāna is a kind of annihilation view. Could the Sayadaw please explain the difference between them?

Answer 3-8: The wrong view of annihilation is the view which holds that a person will come to annihilated after death without

having performed the appropriate causes. On the other hand, the Buddha teaches that effects arise according to their causes. When there are causes the appropriate effects will arise. For example, when there are ignorance, craving, clinging, volitional-formations and kamma, the resultant five aggregates will arise. The Buddha teaches also when there are no causes the effects will not arise. For example, when all ignorance, craving, clinging, volitional-formations and kamma are destroyed by the arahant path, the resultant five aggregates cannot arise. Thus the teaching of Nibbāna is the middle way which shows that causes give rise to their effects in accordance to a natural fixed law. Furthermore if somebody thinks that there is no Nibbāna even though the causes of ignorance, craving, etc. are destroyed, he is actually having the wrong view of eternity.

Question 3-9: The Buddha attained Buddhahood under the bodhi tree, and he was also an arahant. He attained the fourth path and fruition without having first attained the first three paths and fruitions. Are there any disciples who can attain the fourth path and fruition without having first attained the first three paths and fruitions?

Answer 3-9: It is not true. Our bodhisatta attained Buddhahood through the attainment of the four paths and fruitions. He attained the four paths and fruitions in one sitting, and in between two paths there occurred only a few insight knowledges. All those who attained arahantship did so through the attainment of the four paths and fruitions, so none of the Buddha's disciples could attain arahantship without having first attained the three lower paths and fruitions.

Question 3-10: If a person has difficulty in practising paramattha sacca due to his lack in sammutti sacca, how should he remove the difficulty?

Answer 3-10: The Buddha says 'A bhikkhu who has concentration can see things as they really are', thus if you want to see the

ultimate reality, you should develop strong and powerful concentration. You should also practise under the guidance of a skilled teacher.

Here, I shall tell you the story of the Venerable Cūḷapanthaka. After becoming a bhikkhu the Venerable Cūḷapanthaka practised under the guidance of his elder brother, arahant Mahāpanthaka. However he could not even memorise a verse of four lines for the whole rains-retreat. The reason why he became a dullard is as follows: In the lifetime of Kassapa Buddha, the future Cūḷapanthaka was a learned bhikkhu and a Dhamma teacher. Once he jeered at one of his student bhikkhus, a dullard. The bhikkhu felt ashamed on account of his jeering and lost self-confidence in learning. Owing to that evil act the future Cūḷapanthaka became a dullard in many of his future lives. Further, in his last life as Cūḷapanthaka, he suddenly became a dullard after his novitiation. Hence he surprisingly forgot all that he had memorised as soon as he went on to the next portion.

Thinking that he had no potential to attain any path and fruition, his elder brother, the Venerable Mahāpanthaka, asked him to disrobe. On hearing these discouraging words the Venerable Cūḷapanthaka felt sad and cried.

At that time the Buddha was staying in the mango-grove monastery offered by the physician Jivaka. Seeing Cūḷapanthaka's plight and knowing that he would achieve liberation 'on my visit', the Buddha went to him and asked: 'Dear son Cūḷapanthaka, why are you weeping?' 'Because, Venerable Sir, my brother expels me,' answered the Venerable Cūḷapanthaka. 'Dear son Cūḷapanthaka, your brother does not possess the power of knowing intentions and inclinations of beings, but you are an individual to be led by a Buddha.' With these encouraging words the Buddha gave him a piece of clean cloth created by his supernormal power. The Buddha added: 'Dear son Cūḷapanthaka, keep this in your hand and recite "rajo haraṇaṃ, rajo haraṇaṃ – this cloth is liable to take dirt, this cloth is liable to take dirt", thus you meditate on it.'

The Venerable Cūḷapanthaka sat down rubbing with his hand the cloth given by the Buddha and reciting 'this cloth is liable to take dirt, this cloth is liable to take dirt.' When he did the rubbing

several times, the cloth began to get dirty. When he repeated the rubbing, the cloth became dirtier like a kitchen-cloth. As the time came for his wisdom to ripen, the law of extinction and destruction manifested itself to his mind. And he reflected: 'This piece of cloth was originally white and clean. But on account its association with my body it is now full of dirt. My mind is also like this cloth. The mind originally pure and clean in its unperturbed state tends to become soiled on account of its association with unwholesome concomitant factors such as greed, hatred, delusion, etc. Having thus reflected on his person he proceeded to strive for mental concentration and gained the four fine-material jhānas. Using those jhānas as bases, he engaged in Vipassanā meditation and attained arahantship together with the fourfold analytical knowledge and six kinds of psychic powers.

From the case of the Venerable Cūḷapanthaka, we cannot say that a person of low intellectual cannot achieve any high attainment.

Question 3-11: The Buddha taught the Venerable Cūḷapanthaka to attain arahantship through reciting the phrase 'sweeping the floor'. How did it happen? Is that also a meditation subject? Can a person attain the eight attainments, four paths, and four fruitions by reciting 'sweeping the floor'?

Answer 3-11: According to Theravāda Canon, the Venerable Cūḷapanthaka did not recite 'sweeping the floor', but 'liable to take dirt', as I just mentioned.

In one of his previous birth, Cūḷapanthaka was a king. One day, while touring the city for inspection, his forehead sweated and he wiped out the sweat with a clean cloth. The cloth got dirty. The king then talked to himself, 'Because of this impure body, such a clean cloth becomes impure, abandoning its own nature. Impermanent indeed are things conditioned!' Thus he gained the perception of impermanence. Hence for the Venerable Cūḷapanthaka the meditation subject of 'liable to take dirt' was a forceful contribution to his attainment of arahantship. Therefore the Buddha gave him the clean cloth as he saw the Cūḷapanthaka's

previous good act and as he wish to urge him to engage in meditation on the subject that matched with that good act.

The Venerable Cūḷapanthaka had been accumulating pāramīs for a hundred thousand aeons. He studied the Tipiṭaka and practised Vipassanā up to the Knowledge of Equanimity Towards Formations in many of his past lives, this is the natural fixed law for the arahants who attain arahantship together with the fourfold analytical knowledge and six kinds of psychic powers. In his last life, when he saw that the cloth became dirty, he immediately perceived the impermanence nature of conditioned things. Because of his past pāramīs and practices, he was also able to comprehend the impermanent nature of conditioned things. He was able to comprehend the suffering and non-self nature of the conditioned things, and thus attained arahantship.

Question 3-12: Some say that a person must first perform acts of merit before he devotes himself to meditation practice, otherwise he will face with many difficulties. Is it true?

Answer 3-12: It is true if the merits refer to that of past lives. There are two kinds of seed, the seed of knowledge (vijja) and the seed of conduct (carana). The seed of conduct refers to performing giving, practising virtuous conduct, developing concentration, etc. The seed of conduct accumulated in past lives produces the opportunity to have good parents, to meet good friends and teachers, and to meet the Buddha's teachings. The seed of knowledge refers to practising the four-elements meditation, the discernment of materiality, the discernment of mentality, dependent-origination, and Vipassanā. The seed of knowledge accumulated in past lives enables one to understand the Dhamma, especially the Four Noble Truths.

If a person has the seed of conduct but not the seed of knowledge, he will have the opportunity to meet the Buddha's teachings, but cannot thoroughly understand the Dhamma. He is just like a man who has legs but blind. For example, during the Buddha's time, there was a debater named Saccaka. Although the Buddha gave him two discourses he could not attain any path and

fruition. In his mind he agreed to the Buddha that the five aggregates are impermanent and non-self, but he was not willing to agree it verbally. Even though the Buddha knew that he could not attain any path and fruition, he still gave him the two long discourses, because he foresaw that he would, after gaining the seed of knowledge, attain arahantship about four hundred years after his Parinibbāna in Sri Lanka as a Mahāthera named Mahākālabuddharakkhita.

If a person has the seed of knowledge but not the seed of conduct, he can understand the Dhamma if he meets the Buddha's teachings, but it is difficult for him to meet the Buddha's teachings. He is just like a man who has keen eye-sight but no legs. For example, King Ajatasattu had the potential to attain the path and fruition of stream-enterer while listening to the Sammaññaphala Sutta given by the Buddha, but he could not attain the path and fruition because did not meet the Buddha before he killed his father. Thus, owing to the deficiency of the seed of conduct, he could not meet the Buddha at the right time. Also during the Buddha's time, once the Buddha saw an old beggar couple and smiled. The Venerable Ānanda asked the Buddha what was the reason for his smile. The Buddha told him that if the couple practised the Dhamma in their first stage of life, the husband called the son of Mahādhanasetthi would have attained arahantship and his wife would have attained the path and fruition of non-returner. If they practised the Dhamma in their second stage of life, the husband would have attained the path and fruition of non-returner and the wife would have attained the path and fruition of once-returner. If they practised the Dhamma in the first part of their third stage of life, the husband would have attained the path and fruition of once-returner and the wife would have attained the path and fruition of stream-enterer. But they had become beggars, and too old and weak to practise the Dhamma, so they missed the opportunity practise the Dhamma and could not attain any path and fruition. Thus it is very important to have both seeds of conduct and knowledge, so that one have the opportunity to meet the Buddha's teachings as well as to understand the Dhamma.

In terms of the merits in the present life, as I explained in one of my previous talk, it is not so important for those who can attain arahantship in this life. They should emphasize on the threefold training of virtuous conduct, concentration and wisdom, to strive for arahantship. The merit done in the present life cannot give them future benefits, because they have no future life to enjoy the benefits. However it is still important for those who still have to go through more rebirths in the round of rebirths.

Question 3-13: Some bhikkhuni says that if a woman aborts her baby, the departed baby and other departed enemies of her will be always around her. And they make her business fail, family quarrel, and make her ill and have cancer. Will those beings twenty-four hourly follow her and wait for the opportunity to take revenge?

Answer 3-13: The Buddha says that there are more babies who die in the womb than those who are born safely. When a baby dies in the womb, he will be reborn in one of the five destinations according to his kamma that ripens at his near death moment. If he is reborn in hell, animal world, human world, or deva world, he cannot be around his past mother. If he is reborn as a peta, most likely he is experiencing severe suffering and cannot be around his past mother as well. Only a certain peta may be around his past mother, but it is very difficult to determine which departed baby may do so. If the peta stay around his past mother, he cannot do great harms to her. What he can do is only to frighten her, to produce bad smell, etc. thus she should not be afraid of that.

What she should know is that she has done a bad kamma, because causing abortion is killing a human being. If this kamma ripens at her near death moment, she will be reborn in one of the four woeful states. However it is useless for her to cry for having done that, because what is done is done, and nobody can erase a kamma done. What she should do is to avoid doing the same bad kamma. If she can avoid doing all kinds of bad kamma but do good kamma, it will be better. She can perform giving and keep the five precepts. If she can practise Samatha or Vipassanā it will be even better. And if one of these kamma ripens at her near death

moment, she will be reborn in a happy destination. If she can attain the path and fruition of stream-enterer, she will certainly not be reborn in any woeful states in her future lives. To attain the path and fruition is still possible for her, as long as she never do any of the five weighty kamma of matricide, patricide, killing an arahant, shedding the blood of the Buddha, and causing schism in the Saṅgha. A good example is the Venerable Aṅgulimāla. He killed many people when he was still a layman, but he was able to attain arahantship after becoming a bhikkhu. Thus the mother who aborted her baby before should not just worry about it, because it does not help to improve her life. Instead she should make full use of the rest of her life to do good.

Questions and Answers 4

Question 4-1: There is an old bhikkhuni who always says to her devotees that the reason they have cancer is that their past enemies of many aeons are harming them. She further says that they have to pay her three hundred thousand Taiwanese dollars, so that she will remove their bad results by chanting, and they will recover from the cancer. Is it stated in the Theravāda Canon that if a bhikkhu or bhikkhuni takes money from devotees, the cancer of the devotees is guaranteed to disappear?

Answer 4-1: No, it is not stated in the Theravāda Canon.

Question 4-2: There is an old bhikkhuni who always goes to her devotees' houses and says to them that the position of their main door of the house is not good, because it faces directly to the corner of others' house. She says that this has some 'killing energy', so they must shift to other place, otherwise they will have bad luck, their children will fall ill, and their business will cause them to lose money. Is it stated in the Theravāda Canon that some bhikkhus or bhikkhunis helped devotees read 'Feng Sui'?

Answer 4-2: No, it is not stated in the Theravāda Canon.

Question 4-3: There is an old bhikkhuni who, when seeing the departed one's photo in the sitting room in her devotees' houses, says to them that the eyes of the departed one move, so they must not hang the photo of the departed one in the sitting room, otherwise the departed one will stay in the photo and cannot take rebirth.

Can the departed ones stay in their photos? Where do ghosts stay? Will ghosts certainly stay in their children or grandchildren's house?

There is an old bhikkhuni who always says to her devotees that when she passes by the cemetery or the place in temple where the

ashes of the departed one is kept, some ghosts will follow her and ask her to rescue them, so that they can take rebirth in a good plane of existence. Are there ghosts in every cemetery and the place where the ash of the departed one is kept? Does every being, after death, attach to his ashes or corpse and become a ghost?

Answer 4-3: According to the Buddha's teachings, there is the round of rebirths. When a being dies he will, as long as he has not yet attained arahantship, take rebirth dependent on the kamma which ripens at near death moment in accordance with the principle of kamma and kamma-result. If a good kamma ripens then he will be reborn in a happy destination, such as the human world and deva world. If, however, an unwholesome kamma ripens then he will be reborn in one of the woeful states of hell, peta world, and animal world. Thus, to say that every being, after death, attach to his ash or corpse and becomes a ghost is certainly wrong according to the Buddha's teachings. In fact, it is a kind of wrong view of fixed destination. If this were right, the principle of kamma and kamma-result taught by the Buddha would be wrong.

From the above-mentioned principle of kamma and kamma-result, it is clear that not all the departed ones will stay in their past children or grandchildren's houses. Why? Because if he is reborn as a deva, he will be living in the deva world. If he is reborn as a human being, he will be in his new mother's womb or house. It should be understood in the same way if he is reborn in hell or animal world. As for petas, they live in everywhere in the world according to their kamma. Thus, if he is reborn in the peta world, he will suffer in some place according to his kamma. Only very few petas stay in their former houses.

During the Buddha's time, there was a lady who was very attached to her body. When she passed away she was reborn as a peta who stayed in her former body. A bhikkhu saw the corpse at the cemetery and took the robes of the corpse as rag robes. Owing to her attachment, the peta residing in the corpse followed behind the bhikkhu. Thus the corpse walked behind the bhikkhu to his monastery. When the bhikkhu arrived at his monastery, he entered his hut and shut the door. Being unable to follow further, the

corpse fell down in front of the door. This is one of the rare cases wherein a peta resided in the object possessed by her in her previous life.

Question 4-4: There is an old bhikkhuni who claims herself as a meditator, and always says to her devotees that, while meditating, she always sees ghosts who come to see her. To what degree of attainment should a meditator achieve before a ghost comes to him or her for help? Does a meditator need to attain the divine eye to see ghosts?

Answer 4-4: The ghost is of very low class. There is not much we can help them. As I mentioned in one of the questions-and-answers sessions, only a certain kind of peta can share the merit transferred by his past relatives. Other than that kind of peta, there is nothing we can do. Even the Buddha cannot do anything for them.

When a meditator practises loving-kindness meditation, he can partially see petas. He needs to be able to see the petas, otherwise how can he extend his loving-kindness to them? As for a person who has the diving eye, he can see the peta in detail.

Question 4-5: If a person dies while falling into bhavaṅga, without the arising of any wholesome or unwholesome thought, then where will he be reborn dependent on his bhavaṅga? What are the other factors which affect the next rebirth of a person?

Answer 4-5: The last consciousness of every life of every being is the death-consciousness which is also bhavaṅga consciousness. The kamma ripens to produce the rebirth-linking consciousness in the next life is the kamma of the near-death impulsion consciousness which occurs in the last thought-process in a life. It is impossible that none of the wholesome or unwholesome kamma ripens at near-death moment, except for Buddhas, Pacceka-buddhas, and arahants.

Question 4-6: What kind of consciousness does a dream belong to?

Why some dream-like pictures appear while a person is half-asleep, and the mind becomes fresh immediately when the pictures disappear? If some dream appear not because of frequent thinking about it during the day, can it be some event in the past life, or can it be some event that will happen in future? Why? Can we practise Samatha or Vipassanā or entering into jhāna while dreaming?

Answer 4-6: A dream consists of many mind-door thought-processes. We cannot practise Samatha or Vipassanā or entering into jhāna while dreaming because the dream consists of weak mind-door thought-processes. The mind of that person becomes fresh immediately when the pictures disappear because he regains his mindfulness.

There are four causes for dreaming. The first cause is habitual thinking; the second cause is the imbalance of the four elements of the body; the third cause is the intervention by a deva; the fourth cause is the foretelling sign. The dreams of the first two causes are not true. The dream of the third cause can be either true or false. The dream of the last cause is true.

Question 4-7: Once, when I woke up at midnight, I thought it was in the daytime, because it was bright like daytime. Why was it so?

Answer 4-7: If a meditator practises meditation and has light before sleep, he may still have light when he wakes up. But if the person you mentioned is not a meditator, then it is hard to say why it is so.

Question 4-8: How does a Theravāda bhikkhu accumulate merit for his own provision in the round of rebirths? There is a Chinese saying, 'If one cannot attain any path in this life, one will become an animal to repay (one's debt).' Is there any recluse, due to his merits being exhausted or insufficient, becoming a beggar in his future life? How does a worldly bhikkhu make sure that he will be a bhikkhu to continue to practise the Dhamma in his future life?

Answer 4-8: According to the instruction given by the Buddha, a bhikkhu has two duties:

1. To study the scriptures,
2. To practise meditation until the attainment of arahantship.

No matter a bhikkhu chooses to fulfil either of the two duties, the purification of virtue is compulsory. He must observe the virtue of Pātimokkha restraint, the virtue of restraint of sense faculties, the virtue of purification of livelihood, and the virtue concerning requisites. This means that he must have virtue. When he receives some offering from a devotee, he can offer the thing received to his fellow bhikkhus, the Saṅgha, or the Buddha. When he, a virtuous bhikkhu, offers something to a virtuous recipient, his offering is superior and can produce great results, just like the spoonful of rice offered by Indaka to the arahant Anuruddha.

He can also offer the flower he receives to the Buddha. While he is carrying out his monastic duties, such as sweeping the floor, cleaning the Saṅghika building, etc., he is accumulating superior kind of merit. When he pay respect to senior bhikkhus, he is also accumulating merit. Thus a Theravāda bhikkhu always has the opportunity to accumulate great merits for his own provision in the round of rebirths. In fact, he has much greater chances than any layperson to accumulate merit.

If he chooses the second duty he must emphasize his practice on Samatha and Vipassanā meditation. If he can thoroughly practise dependent-origination, or better still is he is able to practise up to the Knowledge of Equanimity Towards Formations, then he will certainly not be reborn in the woeful states in his immediate future life. This means that he has good chances to be a bhikkhu in his future life.

If he can practise Samatha meditation until he attains jhāna, and if he is able to maintain his jhāna until near-death moment, he will be reborn in the brahmā realm. Thus, even he does not attain any path, he can still be reborn in the human world, deva world, or brahmā world in his future life dependent upon his good kamma, such as that of giving, virtue, jhāna, insight knowledge, etc. This occurs in accordance with the principle of kamma and

kamma-result. If he, however, has not practised dependent-origination, he may still be reborn in the woeful states if one of his bad kamma ripens at his near-death moment.

Question 4-9: Can a person, without the guide of a teacher and with or without the guide from the scriptures, practises meditation up to the stage of the Knowledge of Equanimity Towards Formations? How does he know that he has attained the above knowledge?

Answer 4-9: If a person is a bodhisatta or a paccekabodhisatta he can. And this refers especially to his last life when he attains sammāsambodhi or paccekabodhi.

As for others, they also can practise up to the stage of the Knowledge of Equanimity Towards Formations with the guide from the scriptures if he is learned in the Buddha's teachings.

Question 4-10: Can an arahant know that other arahants are arahants?

Answer 4-10: He can if he has the psychic power of reading others' mind. If he does not have this kind of psychic power then he cannot know.

Question 4-11: Once, while sitting, I observed that my thoughts were arising and passing away extremely quickly, but I could not see the contents of the thoughts, neither whether they were wholesome or unwholesome. What kinds of mind did those thoughts belong to?

Answer 4-11: If you do not know whether they were wholesome or unwholesome, then how can I know them?

This kind of knowing of the mind is still superficial. You should at least practise the discernment of mentality, to discern the ultimate mentality then you will be able to understand consciousness and mental concomitants in detail.

Question 4-12: Is it stated in the Theravāda Canon that the bodhisatta path has the difficult way and the easy way? What is the difference if it is?

Answer 4-12: No, it is not stated in the Theravāda Canon. However, the Theravāda Canon mentions that there are three kinds of bodhisatta: paññādhika bodhisatta, saddhādhika bodhisatta and vīriyādhika bodhisatta. A paññādhika bodhisatta takes four incalculables and a hundred thousand aeons; a saddhādhika bodhisatta takes eight incalculables and a hundred thousand aeons and a vīriyādhika bodhisatta takes sixteen incalculables and a hundred thousand aeons to fulfil the ten perfections completely.

Question 4-13: Is it stated in the Theravāda Canon that how a person wish and practise to be reborn in Tusita deva realm, so that he can listen to the discourses given by Arimetteyya bodhisatta there, and gain the definite prophecy when the future Arimetteyya Buddha delivers his three sermons?

Answer 4-13: No, it is not stated in the Theravāda Canon. If you want to gain the definite prophecy from the future Arimetteyya Buddha, you must fulfil the eight factors of being a human being, being a man, meeting a living Buddha, etc. when you meet him.

Question 4-14: There is a saying, ‘death is just like a turtle discarding its shell’. If a person donates his organs after death, can this be considered as the bodhisatta’s practice? Will this act of generosity of a person who has insufficient equanimity affect his chances to be reborn in a happy destination? How should he prepare mentally when he is still alive?

Answer 4-14: To donate one’s organs after death is just like to offer the leftover food; it is not a superior kind of offering and is only a weak wholesome kamma. A bodhisatta usually offers his organs to others when he is still alive.

According to the Buddha’s teachings, rebirth takes place immediately after death. In between the last consciousness of

preceding life, the death consciousness, and the first consciousness of succeeding life, the rebirth-liking consciousness, there is no consciousness. Once the death consciousness has passed away, the rebirth-liking consciousness of the succeeding life arises. Here I would suggest you to know this with your own experience through practising dependent-origination. Now in this retreat there are some meditators trying to discern dependent-origination. If you try hard enough, some day in future you may be able to see this by yourself.

Question 4-15: How should others help a meditator at his near death moment when there is no accident maintain his mindfulness?

Answer 4-15: Others can recite some suttas to him. They can also give him a Dhamma talk. If he can hear and understand the sutta recitation or Dhamma talk, it will be helpful. If he, however, is unconscious or cannot hear then it will not be helpful.

Actually the better way is self-reliance. If he can practise Vipassanā until he attains the path and fruition, it will be the best. If not, to be able to practise Vipassanā at near death moment is the second best. If not, to be able to attain jhāna and maintain it until he dies is also good. As for the other wholesome kamma it is very uncertain. Although the wholesome kamma of giving, virtue, etc. also can produce a good rebirth, because of unwise attention at near death moment unwholesome kamma may overcome them and produce a bad rebirth.

Question 4-16: Is there any difficulty to change from practising four-elements meditation to mindfulness-of-breathing?

Answer 4-16: For some meditators it is true. The four elements around the nose and on the face may be too obvious. Because of this they cannot concentrate on the breath. But some other meditators have not such a problem, and they can concentrate well on the breath.

As for those who have succeeded in four-elements meditation

and practised the discernment of materiality, they will have no problem to practise mindfulness-of-breathing. So too for those who have practised Vipassanā.

Question 4-17: In the story of the Venerable Cūlapanthaka, it is mentioned that ‘Originally the mind is pure. It is impure only when it is tainted with greed, hatred and delusion.’ Is it not an eternal view to say that there is an original mind?

Answer 4-17: The mind in the sentence ‘Originally the mind is pure’ refers especially to bhavaṅga consciousness. As explained in the Aṭṭhasālinī, the commentary to Dhammasangani, bhavaṅga consciousness is pure because, as a resultant consciousness, it is not associated with the unwholesome mental concomitants of greed, hatred, delusion, etc. All resultant, wholesome and functional consciousnesses also are pure because they too are not associated with the unwholesome mental concomitants of greed, hatred, delusion, etc.

According to the Mūlaṭīkā, the subcommentary to the Abhidhamma, all kinds of mind are pure. Only mental concomitants are divided into pure and impure. Unwholesome mental concomitants are impure, and the other mental concomitants are pure.

In the Theravāda teaching, however, there is no such an idea of ‘original mind’. What is mentioned in the Theravada Canon is only that bhavaṅga mind is called the host and the six-door thought-processes are called guests.

Question 4-18: If a person has attained the fourth ānāpāna jhāna, can he practise compassion meditation to attain the first jhāna without having first practised loving-kindness meditation? Can a person, in the same way, practise appreciative-joy meditation without having first practised loving-kindness and compassion meditation? Can a person practise equanimity meditation to attain the first jhāna without having first practised loving-kindness, compassion and appreciative-joy meditation?

Answer 4-18: A meditator can directly practise loving-kindness, compassion, or appreciative-joy meditation to attain the first jhāna. To practise equanimity meditation which can produce only the fourth jhāna, however, a meditator must first practise loving-kindness, compassion and appreciative-joy meditation up to the third jhāna. He must enter into the above three kinds of meditation up to the third jhāna in succession, and then base on them to practise equanimity meditation to attain the fourth jhāna.

Question 4-19: Why a person should, after attaining the fourth ānāpāna jhāna, practise the white, brown, yellow and red kasiṇa up to the fourth jhāna? What is the benefit of practising these four kinds of kasiṇa? Do they help us practise Vipassanā?

Answer 4-19: It is not compulsory to practise the kasiṇa meditation, but it is very helpful to do so. The reason is by practising so a meditator's concentration will be much stronger, and it will be easier for him to practise the discernment of materiality and mentality and dependent-origination. Further his discernment of the ultimate materiality, mentality, and their causes will be much clearer. If he can practise to attain all the eight attainments it will be even better.

Furthermore, if he can attain the eight attainments based upon the white, brown, yellow and red kasiṇas, he can take any objects, such as stone, flower, cloud and cloth, which are white, brown, yellow, or red as object to practise kasiṇa meditation. If he concentrates on their colours he can attain jhāna anywhere and anytime. While doing so many superior type of wholesome dhammas will appear in his thought-processes. Thus to practise various kinds of kasiṇa is very helpful in one's pursuit in the Dhamma.

Question 4-20: Do the strength of concentration of newly attained fourth ānāpāna jhāna and the concentration of newly attained fourth kasiṇa jhāna the same? If ten persons practise ten different kinds of kasiṇa meditation and attain the fourth jhāna, does their concentration the same?

Answer 4-20: No, they are not the same. For example, among the ten kasiṇas, the white kasiṇa is the quietest. Also, the Buddha's fourth jhāna is stronger than any other person's fourth jhāna, because the Buddha's fourth jhāna can perform twin miracle but not others' fourth jhāna. The Venerable Mahāmoggallāna's fourth jhāna is stronger than any other disciple's fourth jhāna, because his fourth jhāna can tame the furious naga king Nandopananda but not other disciples' fourth jhāna.

Questions and Answers 5

Question 5-1: Is it true that the Buddha and aggasāvaka attain Parinibbāna after first entering into the first jhāna up to the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception in the forward order, then in the backward order, and finally entering into the first jhāna up to the fourth jhāna? There is no more rebirth after attaining Parinibbāna, why they have to enter the eight attainments in the forward and backward orders, and finally attain Parinibbāna after enter into the fourth jhāna?

Answer 5-1: I am not sure about the way the Venerable Mahāmoggallāna attained Parinibbāna, but the Buddha and the Venerable Sāriputta attained Parinibbāna in such a manner. It is because of their nature to do so, and their fourth jhāna is functional jhāna which cannot produce any future life.

Question 5-2: If a person, due to his physical problem, wants to practise the white kasiṇa, how should he practise. What are the detailed steps of it?

Answer 5-2: He can use any white object as kasiṇa object and concentrates on the white to practise the white kasiṇa. For example, he can use a white cloth and tie it on a bowl lid to make a white circle. He then sits down at a suitable place and concentrates on the white of it with eyes opened. After a few minute he should close his eyes to see whether he can see the replica of the white circle in his mind. If he can he can concentrate on it until he attain jhāna.

Another way is to practise either mindfulness-of-breathing or four-elements meditation until he succeeded in it. Then he proceeds to practise the thirty-two parts of the body. Once he can see the skeleton or the skull clearly, he can proceed to practise the white kasiṇa based upon the white of the skeleton or the skull.

Question 5-3: What is the difference between the space *kaṣiṇa* and the base of infinite-space? Why the former belongs to the concentration of fine-material sphere? What is the special benefit of practising the space *kaṣiṇa*?

Answer 5-3: When a person practises the space *kaṣiṇa* he perceives the space directly. When he practises the base of infinite-space he concentrates on the space left behind after removing any of the *kaṣiṇa* nimitta except that of the space *kaṣiṇa*. In Pāḷi the object of the space *kaṣiṇa* is called ‘ākāsa’, and the object of the base of infinite-space is called ‘kaṣiṇugghāṭimākāsa’.

Question 5-4: Can a person who does not attain any fine-material and immaterial *jhāna* be reborn in the *brahmā* realm in his future life?

Answer 5-4: No, he cannot.

Question 5-5: Does the beings in the first *jhāna* *brahmā* realm always stay in the first *jhāna*? Can they practise meditation to attain the second *jhāna*, etc., up to the immaterial *jhāna*?

Answer 5-5: No, the beings in the first *jhāna* *brahmā* realm do not stay in the first *jhāna* always. They have the eye-door, ear-door, and mind-door thought-processes, and *bhavaṅga* minds also occur in between those thought-processes.

They can practise meditation to attain the second *jhāna*, etc., up to the immaterial *jhāna*. They can also practise *Vipassanā* until they attain arahantship.

As for the beings in the immaterial realms, they can attain the *jhāna* compatible to their realm and higher *jhānas*, but not lower *jhāna*. For example, the being in the realm of infinite-consciousness can attain the three upper immaterial *jhānas*, but not the base of infinite-space and the four fine-material *jhānas*.

Question 5-6: How should a worldlying *bhikkhu* who has chronic and painful disease which is incurable give his attention to, so that

he can overcome or endure the sickness? Is there any method for him to practise? For example, can he practise based on the sickness and attain the path and fruition?

Answer 5-6: We should remember that even the Buddha could not avoid from having disease. He had severe back pain for ten months until he passed away. Who we are to be free from diseases? When we have a chronic and painful disease which is incurable, it is useless to get angry with the disease or to blame anybody. What we can do is just to endure it and live with it. And make full use of the rest of our life to practise the Dhamma diligently. In fact, in this world there is no doctor who can completely cure a disease. A doctor can only temporarily cure the disease. As the Buddha says: 'The five aggregates are diseases.' Thus, as long as we still have the five aggregates we are subject to have diseases. If you really want to have a complete cure of illness, you should try to attain Nibbāna. In Nibbāna there is no mentality and materiality, and, of course, no diseases.

The sick bhikkhu can practise Vipassanā meditation taking the painful feeling produced by the sickness as object; this is called the comprehension on feeling. However, to comprehend only feeling is not enough for him to attain the path, fruition, and Nibbanā. He must also comprehend the other four aggregates, namely, the aggregates of materiality, perception, formations and consciousness. He must also discern their causes. Then he should comprehend the five aggregates and their causes as impermanent, suffering, and non-self. If he practises thus and when his insight is matured he can attain the path and fruition.

Question 5-7: How does the Theravāda Buddhism of Myanmar face a person who disrobed before coming for the second bhikkhu ordination? How should the Order of Bhikkhu handle this in accordance with the Dhamma Vinaya?

Answer 5-7: According to the Vinaya of Theravāda Buddhism, it is not prohibited for a person who disrobed before to be re-ordained a bhikkhu. During the Buddha's time there was a

bhikkhu called Citta who became a bhikkhu for six times and disrobed for six times. Again he was ordained and became a bhikkhu for the seventh time. But this time he did not disrobe because he had attained arahantship.

In Myanmar and Thailand there are many temporary bhikkhus. Usually they come to be a bhikkhu for only a few days to a few months. This is the tradition of the Buddhists in the two countries. During the Buddha's time, however, there was not such a thing as temporary bhikkhu. The practice of becoming a temporary bhikkhu should not be encouraged, but there is nothing I can do about the tradition.

Question 5-8: Could the elephant created by the Mahānāga Mahāthera harm people? The Mahānāga Mahāthera was able to create the elephant by his psychic power, could he make the elephant disappear by his psychic power then? Why did he not know that he could do that then? Is it true that when fear arises psychic power cannot occur?

Answer 5-8: No, the elephant could not harm people. The Mahānāga Mahāthera could make the elephant disappear by his psychic power then, but he did not do so because he forgot it. Fear and psychic power consciousness occur in different thought-processes, not at the same moment.

Question 5-9: One who practises the bodhisatta path must practise the perfection of patience. Does one who practises the liberation path need to practise the perfection of patience?

Answer 5-9: Yes, one who practises the liberation path needs to practise the perfection of patience. He also needs to practise the other nine perfections. He must practise the ten perfections to certain degree until they are strong enough for him to attain arahantship. However, his perfections cannot be compared to a bodhisatta's perfections which are much superior to his.

Question 5-10: During meditation retreat everybody practises

mainly the liberation path, why the Sayadaw gives the talk on the bodhisatta path? Does it have special meaning?

Answer 5-10: Because some Mahāyāna monk suggested me to talk on the bodhisatta path. And I also have the intention to teach the bodhisatta path in accordance with the Theravāda teaching, so that it may benefit those of you who want to practise the bodhisatta path.

We cannot say that to meditate is only practising the liberation path. A bodhisatta not only must practise meditation, but also must practise Samatha and Vipassanā up to very high stage. You should remember one of the ten perfections is the perfection of renunciation that culminates in the attainment of jhāna. The perfection of loving-kindness and equanimity also culminate in the attainment of loving-kindness and equanimity jhānas which take all beings in the infinite universe as object. You should also remember one of the ten perfections is the perfection of wisdom, and the Knowledge of Equanimity Towards Formations is the highest wisdom and equanimity a bodhisatta must attain. How can he attain the knowledge without practising meditation?

Furthermore, when a person practises meditation diligently, he is also practising the perfection of energy. He must practise meditation with great patience and determination, and based upon his pure virtue. Thus, when he practises meditation he is accumulating many kinds of perfection. From the Jātaka stories, we know that in many lives when our bodhisatta was reborn as a human being he practised meditation, especially the jhānas of the four kinds of sublime abiding, ten kasiṇas, eight attainments, and five mundane psychic powers. So it is clear that a bodhisatta must practise meditation, and meditation is not only for those who wish to be an arahant.

Question 5-11: Where is the origin of the idea of bodhisatta? Why is this idea taught and being developed?

Answer 5-11: In the second year after his enlightenment, the Buddha went back to his native town, the city of Kapilavatthu.

When he arrived at the city, the Sakyans welcomed the Buddha and his host of bhikkhus in a great ceremony and took them to Nigrodhārāma monastery as they had arranged beforehand. On arrival at the monastery the Buddha sat in the seat specially prepared for him and remained quietly surrounded by twenty thousand arahants. The Sakyans who took too great a pride in their high birth thought to themselves: ‘This prince Siddhattha is younger than we. He is only a young brother, or a young nephew, or a young grandson of ours.’ And puffed up with conceit they urged their younger kinsmen, ‘You bow in homage to the Buddha; we shall, however, stay behind you.’

The Buddha knew the inner minds of the Sakyans swelling with pride of their birth, so he performed the twin miracle to subdue their pride. The exhibition of the twin miracle with the emission of fire and water alternately from the body of the Buddha created a marvellous spectacle of great splendour which inspired all the Sakyans with awe and reverence, moving them to utter words of resounding praise.

At that time the Venerable Sāriputta, who was residing at Gijjhakuta Hill, Rājagaha, saw through his supernormal power the whole event taking place at Kapilavatthu and thought to himself: ‘I shall now go to the Buddha and make a request for a complete narration of the life histories of the bodhisattas and the perfections they had fulfilled.’ Accordingly, he lost no time to gather the five hundred arahants, who were all his co-residents, and said to them: ‘Come, we will go. We will pay a visit to the Master and ask him about the past stories of the Buddhas.’ Having urged them to accompany him, they all travelled through space by means of supernormal power with so fast a speed surpassing that of the wind and the storm. In a moment the Venerable Sāriputta with the company of bhikkhus arrived before the Buddha, paid homage to him, and made the request.

Upon his request, the Buddha delivered the Buddhavaṃsa which covers the bodhisatta’s stories from Dīpaṅkara Buddha’s time up to the time he was Prince Vessantara. Thus, the origin of the idea of bodhisatta path is the Buddha.

We can know the reason why it was taught from the words of

the Buddha: ‘Listen to the Buddhavaṃsa Discourse that could give you joy and happiness, remove the thorns of sorrow and bestow upon you the three kinds of bliss, namely, human existence, divine existence and Nibbāna. Having thus listened, try to follow and practise the path as will be explained in this discourse that could dispel conceit, eradicate sorrow, liberate you from the round of rebirths and put an end to all suffering.’

Question 5-12: If a female cannot attain liberation in this life, what should she do to be able to become a man in future life, and continue to practise the Dhamma?

Answer 5-12: As the Buddha says that a person’s desire can be fulfilled through his pure virtue, she too can become a man through her pure virtue. If she can attain jhāna and maintain it up to near death moment, she will be reborn as a brahmā who has no sex-determining materiality but appears in the male form.

If she practises Samatha and Vipassanā successfully up to the stage of stream-enterer like Gopikā Princess and wishes for the life of a man, she will be able to become a man in the future life.

Question 5-13: From the standpoint of Theravāda Buddhism, is the Buddha ‘almighty’ or just an Enlightened One.

Answer 5-13: No, the Buddha is not almighty. He is just an Enlightened One. In the Dhammapada verse 276, the Buddha says:

‘Tumhehi kiccaṃ ātappaṃ;
Akkhātāro Tathāgatā.
Paṭipannā pamokkhanti
Jhāyino Mārabandhanā.’

‘You yourselves should make an effort; the Awakened Ones are only teachers. The devoted to meditation arrive at release from the bonds of Māra.’

The Buddha is the best teacher of man and deva, but he is not an almighty rescuer. He can show us the way to Nibbāna, but he cannot walk for us. He knows how is the working of kamma and kamma-result, but he cannot against it. If he were almighty, could

he create a rock that he could not move? Please think about it. And if he were almighty then he were not compassionate, because he did not make all the being a Buddha by his psychic powers.

Question 5-14: How does a person who wants to practise the bodhisatta path practise until he attains the Knowledge of Equanimity Towards Formations but not the Path Knowledge?

Answer 5-14: If he is a bodhisatta who has received a definite prophecy he will never attain any path and fruition no matter how hard he try, except in his last life when he becomes a Buddha. Even though he has not received a definite prophecy, but if he has a strong desire to become a Buddha, his insight will automatically stop at the stage of the Knowledge of Equanimity Towards Formations.

Question 5-15: Is it stated in the Theravāda Canon that the Buddha gave definite prophecy of future attainment of Buddhahood to anybody other than Arimetteyya Bodhisatta?

Answer 5-15: In the Anāgatavaṃsa written in Sri Lanka, it mentions ten persons who received the definite prophecy from the Buddha, but this is a later work, and does not belong to the Pāḷi Text.

Question 5-16: How to study the Theravāda Canon or the Pāḷi Text systematically and where to start? What are the special features of the Pāḷi Text?

Answer 5-16: If you want to have a thorough study of the Theravāda Canon or the Pāḷi Text it is better for you to study it in Pāḷi, because many of the Pāḷi scriptures are not translated into other languages. Furthermore there are always some changes in the meaning in the translation from the original text.

The Pāḷi grammar usage is slightly different between different countries. However, you can choose any of them, for example Sinhalese Pāḷi or Burmese Pāḷi. Other than this you should study

the scripture under the guidance of a learned teacher. You should also study the Pāḷi Text together with the commentary and the subcommentary because without studying the commentary and the subcommentary you cannot understand the Pāḷi Text thoroughly.

The Tipiṭaka consists of the Vinaya, Sutta, and Abhidhamma. Of the three, every bhikkhu and bhikkhuni must study the Vinaya Piṭaka thoroughly. The Sutta Piṭaka consists of various suttas which teach us the way up to the attainment of arahantship. As for those who are practising the discernment of mentality, materiality, and dependent-origination, they must at least have some basic Abhidhamma knowledge, otherwise they cannot practise them thoroughly.

Question 5-17: What are the defilements removed by the first, second, third, and fourth paths? In which scripture is this stated?

Answer 5-17: The first path removes wrong view of personality, doubt and attachment to rites and rituals. In certain suttas and the Abhidhamma, jealousy and stinginess are also mentioned to be removed by the first path. The second path attenuates sensual desire and hatred. The third path removes sensual desire and hatred. The fourth path removes the remaining five higher fetters: desire for fine-material existence, desire for immaterial existence, conceit, restlessness, and ignorance.

Question 5-18: Is it true that a person who is blind and deaf has no eye-transparent element and ear-transparent element?

Answer 5-18: Yes, if he is completely blind and deaf.

Question 5-19: If a person's right hand is deformed, depending on the left hand to do thing, but he is quite wise and have the condition to receive the higher ordination. When this person has enough vassa, can he give the higher ordination to others?

Answer 5-19: According to the Theravāda Vinaya he can. Only when he received the higher ordination, the bhikkhus who

participated in the ordination procedure committed a wrong doing offence (dukkata), but he himself did not commit any offence.

Instant Questions and Answers

Question 1: Is it good for a Theravada bhikkhu to pay respect to a bodhisatta? For example, should he do añjali to the Arimetteyya bodhisatta?

Answer 2: According to Theravada Vinaya rules, a bhikkhu should not pay respect or bow down to the pay people, or wonem, or devas, or brahmas. So now if the Arimetteyya bodhisatta became a bhikkhu and he were a senior bhikkhu, then we should pay respect to him. But if he were a junior bhikkhu, then we should not pay respect. If he became a lay person, or a deva, or a brahma, then we should not pay respect to him, either. If we did, then we would commit a dukkata offence.

Question 2: Is it true that a bhikkhu becomes a real bhikkhu only after he has attained sotāpattimagga and sotapattiphala?

Answer 2: There are two types of bhikkhus, i.e. sammuti bhikkhu and real bhikkhu. Puthujjana bhikkhus are sammuti bhikkhus. Sammuti bhikkhus mean that they become bhikkhus by way of Buddha's permission. They ordain in sīma by the reciting of kammavācā. As long as they have not attained ariyaship, they are still puthujjanas. If they are still puthujjanas, they are called sammuti bhikkhus, bhikkhus by name only.

But these by-name bhikkhus must also observe pātimokkhasamvara sīla (virtue of pātimokkha restraint), indriyasamvara sīla (virtue of restraint of sense faculties), ājivapārisuddhi sīla (virtue of livelihood purification), and paccayasannissita sīla (virtue concerning requisites). These four types of sīla are called adhisīla. Adhisīla is very

important for a bhikkhu. Why? There may be a puthujjana bhikkhu and a arahant bhikkhu. If the puthujjana bhikkhu is senior to the arahant bhikkhu, then the arahant bhikkhu must pay respect to the puthujjana bhikkhu. This is our vinaya rules. So adhisīla is very important.

Question 3: According to Mahāyāna tradition, there are fifty-two stages for bodhisattas. How about in Theravada? Are there different stages for bodhisattas?

Answer 3: Bodhisattas are bodhisattas only. There are no different stages for bodhisattas. It is true that they are wise men, but there are no stages between them.

Question 4: It is mentioned in ‘Knowing and Seeing’ that in our bodhisatta’s last life, before his enlightenment he was still a puthujjana. It means he still had avijja. How can it be possible? Our bodhisatta had possessed eight factors four asankheyya and one hundred thousand aeons ago. One of the eight factors was that if he wanted he could become an arahant even before the Buddha finished a verse. And after the definite prophesy, he always maintained wise attention and great compassion. He had practised so for many aeons. Then how can it be possible that in his last life before enlightenment avijja still occurred in his mind and he enjoyed sensual pleasure?

Answer 4: You should understand the law of dependent-origination that without avijja attachment cannot occur. In our bodhisatta’s last life before enlightenment, he still had attachment to his wife, Yasodharā and his son, Rāhula. Why was the attachment for Yasodharā and Rāhula surrounded by delusion? According to insight knowledge, both internal body and external body are composed of small

particles. If we can analyse these small particles, we can discern only materialities. These materialities are always changing. As soon as they arise they perish away, so they are impermanent. They are always oppressed by arising and passing away, so they are suffering. There is no self in them, so they are non-self. It was true that in time of Dīpaṅkara Buddha, our bodhisatta had this type of insight knowledge. But his insight knowledge could only temporarily remove the delusion. Only ariya magga can completely destroy delusion. So he still had delusion. Because of this delusion, he knew that this was Yasodharā or Rāhula. The attention that this was Yasodharā or Rāhula was unwise attention (ayoniso manasikāra). This was delusion. Because of this delusion, he had attachment to Yasodharā or Rāhula.

If insight knowledge is present and occurring successively, delusion cannot occur. But when insight knowledge is not present, then depending on unwise attention, delusion occurs. Due to this reason, when he came down to human world he still had attachment for human life, because in that life he could attain enlightenment. So if he knew that this was a human life, this was delusion. Attachment for human life is called taṇhā. Because of avijja and taṇhā there arose in him clinging, upādāna. Because of avijja, taṇhā and upādāna, he performed kusala kamma. And because of the kammic force, he came down to human world. At that time he still had delusion and attachment. Because of the delusion and attachment, when he became mature, he married Yasodharā and got a son, Rāhula. This was the practice of worldlings, which he proclaimed on his first sermon, Dhammacakka-pavattana Sutta.

Only when he attained supreme enlightenment that delusion and attachment were completely destroyed in him. Why? Because his arahattamagga had completely destroyed all delusion and all attachment.

Question 5: To make an abhinīhāra, a person must have eight factors. The second one is the person must be a man. And the Buddha said that it is impossible for a woman to become a Buddha. But Yasodharā had made a vow for bodhisatta in front of two billion Buddhas. Why could she do that?

Answer 5: She did not wish to become a bodhisatta. She only wished to help our bodhisatta to fulfilled pāramis, just like the helpers in this meditation retreat.

A woman cannot become a Buddha means that as long as she is a woman she cannot become a Buddha. But she can try to become a man first. After she becomes a man, if the man has eight factors then he can get definite prophesy from the Buddha. Having got the definite prophesy, he must fulfill pāramis for at least four asaṅkheyya and one hundred thousand aeons. When his pāramis are mature he can become a Buddha. During the life he get definite prophesy and the life he attains enlightenment, he cannot become a woman. But before he gets definite prophesy, sometimes he may become a woman.

Question 6: How can a bodhisatta still a puthujjana? Since he had practised meditation for so many aeons and his insight knowledge was more powerful than an arahant he should be an ariya, not a puthujjana.

Answer 6: His ariyamagga occurred together with sabbaññutāñāṇa. Before he attained sabbaññutāñāṇa, his ariyamagga and ariyaphala were not yet mature. Before ariyamagga stage all persons are still puthujjanas, even they have practised up to saṅkhārupekkhāñāṇa.

Question 7: Can a sotāpanna still get married and have

children?

Answer 7: Yes, like Visākhā, Anāthapiṇḍika etc. In time of Buddha, in Kosala there were seventy million people. Among the seventy people, five million were ariya persons. And most of them were householders.

Question 8: There are eleven benefits of mettā bhāvanā. If a person practises mettā bhāvanā but is unable to attain mettā jhāna, can he still gain some benefits from mettā?

Answer 8: Yes, he can. In Visuddhimagga one story is mentioned: When a cow was serving milk to her calf, a hunter stroke her with a spear. But the spear could not enter into the cow. This is only ordinary mettā. If you try mettā bhāvanā, although you do not attain any mettā jhāna, the mettā bhāvanā kusala dhamma can produce good results in this human life and in the coming future lives in deva worlds or in brahma worlds.

Question 9: In Abhidhammattha Saṅghaha, it is mentioned that if a person practises only the four brahmavihāra he cannot attain any magga and phala. Could the Sayadaw give more explanation?

Answer 9: Because four brahmavihāra can produce only jhānas. Mettā brahmavihāra can produce up to third jhāna. Karuṇā brahmavihāra and mutidā brahmavihāra also can produce up to third jhāna respectively. Upekkhā brahmavihāra can produce fourth jhāna. If they practise only these jhānas and do not practise vipassanā they cannot attain Nibbāna. After death they may be reborn in one of the brahma woulds. Only vipassanā can produce to reach Nibbāna of to see Nibbāna.

Based on these brahmavihāra jhānas, if they can discern mentality, materiality and their causes, and if they can contemplate these mentality, materiality and their causes as anicca, dukkha and anatta, then they can attain Nibbāna, see Nibbāna, realize Nibbāna.

Question 10: Why did the Buddha not teach his disciples to practise up to only saṅkhārupekkhāñña and then make the abhinīhāra and practise the bodhisatta path to attain Buddhahood?

Answer 10: You should ask Buddha the question, I think. It is mentioned in many suttas that to make beings escape from the round of rebirths, to make beings escape from jāti, jarā, maraṇa etc., Buddha appeared in this world. Buddha's intention is that since he knows the Four Noble Truths sāvakas must also know the Four Noble Truths, since he has crossed the round of rebirths sāvakas must also cross the round of rebirths, etc. This is Buddha's intention.

Question 11: The Buddha said that all beings are equal. Then why did the Buddha not, at the beginning, teach all his disciples to become Buddhas, so that everybody would be equal, and no more differences of Buddhas, paccekabuddhas and arahants exist?

Answer 11: According to Theravada Tipiṭaka, there are sabhāva lakkhaṇa and samañña lakkhaṇa. Samañña lakkhaṇa means anicca, dukkha and anatta. These three characteristics are called samañña lakkhaṇa. If a yogi can discern mentality and materiality internally and externally, then he will know that both internal and external mentality and materiality are anicca, dukkha and anatta. At that time, all are the same.

Although they are anicca, dukkha, anatta dhammas,

some anicca, dukkha, anatta dhammas are concomitant together with insight knowledge which knows the Four Noble Truths, but some anicca, dukkha, anatta dhammas are not. Some anicca, dukkha, anatta dhammas are concomitant together with sabbaññutāñāṇa. Some anicca, dukkha, anatta dhammas are concomitant together with aggasāvakañāṇa. Some anicca, dukkha, anatta dhammas are concomitant together with mahāsāvakañāṇa. Some anicca, dukkha, anatta dhammas are concomitant together with pakatisāvakañāṇa. In this way, they are different from one another.

Answer 12: Why non-talking is very important during meditation retreat?

Answer 12: Talking usually produces many thoughts. While you are meditating these thoughts will annoy your meditation practice, especially your concentration.

Question 13: According to Mahayana Buddhism, even though the Buddha had entered Nibbana, he can still use his psychic power to make many Buddhas to save beings to deliverance. How does the Sayadaw think about this?

Answer 13: It is mentioned in one sutta, Khandhaka-moggallāna Sutta, as follows:

One day, a brāhmaṇa, a professor in mathematics, asked the Buddha many questions. Buddha answered and the brāhmaṇa was satisfied. At last, he asked this question: ‘Do all your disciples escape from the round of rebirths?’ ‘Some escape from the round of rebirths, but some don’t.’ the Buddha answered. Again the brāhmaṇa asked ‘Nibbāna is always there. The Buddha who shows the way leading to Nibbāna is also always there. Then why do some reach Nibbāna, but some not?’ Then Buddha asked him ‘Do you

know the path leading to Rājagaha?’ ‘Yes, I do.’ ‘If two persons ask you the path leading to Rājagaha, then one goes according to your instruction while the other doesn’t follow your instruction but takes another wrong way. As a result, one reaches Rajagaha and the other does not reach Rājagaha. Why does this problem occur?’ The brāhmaṇa answered ‘O, Gotama, how can I do? I am showing the way leading to Rājagaha only.’ ‘In the same way, Buddha is showing the way leading to Nibbāna only. They must practise according to their own effort. Some may reach Nibbāna, some may not.’ So Buddhas are only showing the way leading to Nibbana. They do not save anyone. In Buddha’s Abhidhamma, Buddha never saved anyone to reach Nibbāna. He only showed the path leading to Nibbāna.

According to Abhidhamma, Buddha’s psychic power is rūpāvacara kiriya abhiññā citta. This is only mentality, nāma. When Buddha took Parinibbāna, all mentalities and materialities ceased. Among these mentalities, psychic power is also included. So Buddha’s psychic power also ceased when he took Parinibbāna. There was no more psychic power of the Buddha.

Question 14: Is there an eternal mind in Nibbāna to enjoy the permanence, happiness and purity of Nibbāna? If there is nothing in Nibbāna, I cannot imagine what is Nibbāna like.

Answer 14: Nibbana is beyond imagination. If there were an eternal mind, since the mind were māna, then Nibbana would be meaningless. Nibbana is the cessation stage of all dukkha sacca and samudaya sacca. Dukkha sacca is five aggregates. Among the five aggregates, there are four māna aggregates. All mānas and rūpas cease in Nibbāna. So if there were an eternal mind in Nibbāna, then Nibbāna would be meaningless.

Answer 15: In the canon of Mahāyāna, there are five unimaginable things. Among the five, one is the Buddha's psychic power. Then since the Buddha's psychic power is unimaginable, we cannot explain it according to Abhidhamma. Also, we cannot explain the many Buddhas produced by that psychic power. Is that right?

Answer 15: The psychic power is unimaginable only when the Buddha is still alive, but not after his Parinibbāna. Not only Buddha's psychic power is unimaginable but also others' psychic power unimaginable.

Question 16: After the Buddha took Parinibbāna, he would not come out again to the round of rebirths to help beings. However, during the period he was practising paramis, he had many associations with many beings. When those beings' conditions for deliverance are mature, the Buddha cannot come out of Nibbāna to help them, can he?

Answer 16: Usually, Buddha's companies follow after him. Their pāramīs are usually mature in time of the Buddha. In time of Buddha, there were forty times of innumerable beings came to know the Four Noble Truths and became ariyas. We cannot calculate how many their number was. When our bodhisatta was fulfilling pāramīs, these beings were his companies.

Question 17: Accompanying with which magga and phala does the Buddha's sabbaññutāñāna occur?

Answer 17: Arahattamagga and arahattaphala.

Answer 18: If a bhikkhu accepted bhikkhu's ordination when

he was less than twenty years old. Without knowing that it was unlawful, he kept bhikkhu's precepts seriously. Then can we consider him as a real bhikkhu?

Answer 18: He was not a real bhikkhu, but his keeping precepts was good. It was a kusala-kamma. If he was honest, then there was no problem for him to attain jhana, magga and phala. But if he knew that he was not a real bhikkhu, he should take new ordination.

Question 19: When we count the age of a candidate for bhikkhu's ordination, should we include the period in womb?

Answer 19: Yes, we do. Usually there are nine or ten months.

Question 20: If a person took ordination under a false bhikkhu without knowing that his preceptor were not a real bhikkhu, then could we consider him as a real bhikkhu or sāmaṇera? If not, could we consider him as a pārājika person?

Answer 20: According to Theravada Tipiṭaka, the person is not a real bhikkhu or sāmaṇera. But if he is honest and his mind is pure, then there is no problem for him to take a new full ordination in this present life.

According to Theravada Buddhism, in the arer outside India, there must be at least five bhikkhus to form the sangha for bhikkhu's ordination. If, among the five bhikkhus, one has committed pārājaka, then the candidate cannot become a bhikkhu. If there are more than ten bhikkhus in the ordination hall, one of them has committed pārājaka but the others haven't, and if they recite kammavācā totally, then the

candidate can become a bhikkhu.

Question 21: How long after the conception takes place does the abortion cause the killing of human being?

Answer 21: As soon as the paṭisandhi-citta occurs the abortion which causes the baby's life to cease is the killing of human being.

Question 22: As soon as the paṭisandhi-citta occurs we call it a life. What are the nāmas and rūpas then? Are there bhāva-dasaka-kalāpa, kāya-dasaka-kalāpa, etc. like what we have now?

Answer 22: Do you want to know? If you do, then please study practically. If you practise dependent-origination you will see how many rūpas and nāmas there are.

According to Buddha's Abhidhamma, in time of paṭisandhi there are thirty types of rūpas and for those who have wisdom and the mind concomitant with joy, there are thirty-four mental formations. Thirty rūpas exist in kāya-dasaka-kalāpa, bhāva-dasaka-kalāpa and hadaya-dasaka-kalāpa. In each of these three types of kalāpas there is jīvita rūpa, life faculty of rūpa. Among the thirty-four mental formations there is jīvitindriya. Thus, since both rūpa jīvita and nāma jīvita are present we call it a life.

Question 23: Vipassanā practice belongs to vijjā seed. Then, can we say that one is not cultivating caraṇa seed when practising vipassanā?

Answer 23: Yes. But in some suttas there are some different cases.

There are two types of meditation, samatha and vipassanā. Samatha meditation is included under the section of caraṇa seed, and vipassanā, vijjā seed. But sometimes vipassanā practice is also considered as caraṇa seed. For example, if vipassanā is the most powerful kamma which matures in time of death, then it will produce new paṭisandhi. In this case, vipassana is regarded as caraṇa seed.